

Student News, Student Views

July 28, 2003



Special Edition Special Edition

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The LANL Students' Association is pleased to announce the first annual Mentor Appreciation Day, July 31, 2003! You can honor your mentor for all that they have done to help you personally, as well as professionally, during your internship at LANL by taking them out to lunch, sending them an e-mail, sending them flowers, giving them a card, baking them cookies, or anything else you feel would help to recognize them for their guidance and support. Great mentors really make a difference here at LANL, and we owe it to them to give them a day of celebration and appreciation!

This special edition of Student News, Student Views was developed after a suggestion from Elisha Valdez, a UGS working with Helen Archuleta in SUP-1. Her idea was to implement a way to acknowledge the great mentors at the laboratory and the outstanding work that they do. Her idea is what initiated this special edition, where students across the laboratory were given an opportunity to recognize their excellent mentors. Throughout this newsletter, several mentors are recognized for their excellence in mentoring. This is an example of the outstanding mentorship offered here at LANL.



Seven satisfied students with their mentor, Dave Poston (center).

“The successful leader does not talk down to people. He lifts them up”
-Richard Nixon

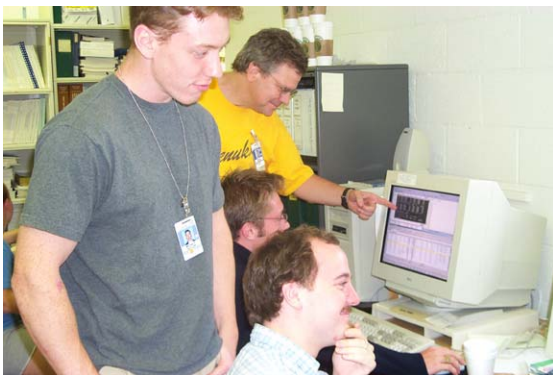
Above and Beyond the Call of Duty

An example of a mentor who has gone above and beyond the call of duty is [Dr. Manvendra Dubey](#) from EES-6. [Jacob Hedden](#) is the student who had the opportunity to be mentored by Dr. Dubey.

“Much like most other mentors and researchers at the lab, he is an extremely busy person and rarely has free time, yet he still finds time to check up on me and make sure my summer is progressing smoothly. He is always concerned with my well-being and that my experience at the lab is a positive one. We had exchanged emails before I arrived in Los Alamos, so I had some idea of what I was going to be doing, but he welcomed any questions or concerns I had about the experiments I would be performing. From what I've heard, this genuine concern for students is rare among mentors, and this alone separates him from the crowd. He has truly gone above and beyond the call of duty, however, by offering me a place to live for the summer. When I arrived in Los Alamos, I hadn't been able to find an apartment to live in and had no idea where I would be staying. He offered his guest bedroom for me to stay in while I searched for available accommodations. With housing such a problem in Los Alamos, it's no surprise I found next to nothing in the week I spent searching. I found a one-bedroom guest house for rent for about \$1000/month and others that would have cost in excess of \$2000/month. Dr. Dubey understood my predicament and rather than allowing me to spend half of my salary on lodging, he offered to rent his guest room to me for the summer. It has been a wonderful experience getting to know his family this summer. I greatly appreciate his efforts to make my summer more enjoyable and much more affordable.”

“The first responsibility of a leader is to define reality. The last is to say thank you. In between, the leader is a servant.”

-Max De Pree



Mentor Dave Poston, explaining project information to his students, of D-5, of which are Tyler Ellis and Ben Amiri who wanted to commend their mentor.

[Ben Amiri](#) also believes that his mentor, [Dave Poston](#), went above and beyond the call of duty as you can see in the following section.

“Performing important work is very satisfying, but Dave's role as a mentor extends beyond the workplace. He often takes the entire group on hikes around New Mexico and even Colorado. Working for Dave I have hiked the highest points in New Mexico and Colorado, as well as countless others—something I would have never done otherwise. Dave also takes his interns on fun and worthwhile trips— I have been to several space conferences, and toured the facilities of NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Alabama on work-related trips.

Dave sets a high standard for work, as he is often working at the lab into the night and weekends. It is not at all unusual for him to work until 2 or 3 am. His example and the enjoyable trips provide even more encouragement to do the best work possible. Dave has done an excellent job making an internship at LANL educational and challenging, while ensuring that those working for him enjoy the time they spend in New Mexico. I have gotten a very positive impression of LANL while working for Dave, and I hope be involved in the same type of work I am doing now as a staff member after getting my Ph.D.”

“Good leaders make people feel that they’re at the very heart of things, not at the periphery. Everyone feels that he or she makes a difference to the success of the organization. When that happens people feel centered and that gives their work meaning.”

-Warren Bennis

Education and Encouragement



“The whole art of teaching is only the art of awakening the natural curiosity of young minds for the purpose of satisfying it afterwards.”

-Anatole France

Several students wrote in and said that they have had the opportunity to learn an immense amount of knowledge from their mentors that not only benefits them now, but will help them succeed in their future careers.

[Ian Bernstein](#), from NIS-4, for example, wanted to share about how much he has learned during the past 2 summers from his mentor, [Kevin McCabe](#).

“I feel that after the summer has gone by, I have not only learned almost as much as I would have in a semester at school but I had an awesome time doing it. Kevin is not only a great mentor but a great person as well, he often invites me to activities outside of work and has given me

good information that has helped me do much better back in school. I'm glad I have the opportunity to work with such great people at such a great laboratory and I look forward to hopefully returning next year for another awesome summer!”

[Michael Choi](#), from D-2, also wanted to commend his mentor, [Tom Farish](#), for an overall wonderful learning experience this summer.

“The whole summer has been a great learning experience, a lot better than what I expected in the beginning. This I owe to my great mentor Tom. Even before I came to work for the lab, Tom kept in touch with me through emails and phone calls.

He explained to me what D-2 group does and what kind of projects I will be working on. He even helped me look for a house in Los Alamos. Once I got to the lab, Tom welcomed me warmly and introduced me to my new office. There are several things

that make Tom a great mentor. First, the summer project he assigned me was quite challenging and was a topic that was very relevant to my major. Tom put considerable amount of time choosing a project that would most interest me, and at the same time, serve as

“Our chief want in life is
somebody who shall
make us do what we
can.” -*Ralph Waldo
Emerson*

a valuable learning experience for me. Second, Tom made sure I wasn't lost while working on the project. He provided me with software, manuals, and articles and arranged meetings with other lab employees who could help me finish the project. Third, Tom's genuine interest in me helped me enjoy my time at LANL. My office is located in TA-52 while Tom's office is in TA-3. However, almost everyday without exceptions, Tom stops by my office in

the afternoon to check up with me and to answer any questions I have. I doubt whether my experience at LANL would have been as delightful and pleasant if I had not met Tom.”



[Ben Fresquez](#) showing his mentor, [Art Chavez](#), some of the computer skills he has learned from him in the past ten months.

[Benito Fresquez](#) also wanted to thank his mentor, [Art Chavez](#), both with the HSR-IM desktop support team, for everything he has learned from him and for always stressing the importance of education.

“During my time working here, I have gained much knowledge on many tasks including the set-up of computers, various program applications, government wipes and much more. I couldn't have acquired this understanding without the help and guidance of my mentor Art Chavez. Art has been there for me on a professional and personal level. He is always there encouraging me to succeed and learn all that I can. Whenever there is a problem or question, I know that Art will assist me in finding the answer. Even though I

have such a busy schedule with college classes and other various activities, he understands. He always tells me that education should be my top priority, and I am here as a student for an educational purpose. His support has truly made my experience here at LANL very rewarding.”



[Matt Cannon](#), working with P-25, also wanted to recognize his mentor, [Richard Schirato](#). Matt is truly grateful for having a wonderful mentor like Richard to turn to for advice and guidance in his job.

“My mentor is fantastic. He is always there to help me with both work and academic issues. He takes time to answer my questions and concerns. He is more than just a supervisor, he truly is a mentor. He has taken a real interest in me and my career, not just an interest in my work on our project.”

[Tyler Ellis](#), another student fortunate enough to be mentored by [Dave Poston](#), wrote in to tell us about his learning experience this summer.

“Although I have only worked here for this summer, he has taught me more about the engineering process than my last two years of school at MIT. Unlike most mentors I've heard about, he gives me meaningful work that has been used in presentations he has given to engineers from JPL, NASA, Oakridge, and Naval Reactors. He has even taken me to conferences and meetings so that I would have a chance to see what working here as a nuclear engineer entails. I would have to say I'm pretty excited to start working here as soon as I finish up my Ph.D. He is active outside the lab as well by organizing numerous hikes up various mountain ranges in the area.”



Mentor [Dave Poston](#) of D-5 explains a poster to several of his students at TA-52.

“You get the best out of others when you give the best of yourself”
-[Harry Firestone](#)



Valued Students

GRA [Luci Lund](#), of SUP-3, tells about her experience with mentor, [Carol Smith](#) and her appreciation for all she has learned from her.

“Not only has my experience been great, but Carol, with the excellent help of Mary Van Eeckhout, routinely mentors 15 other appreciative students as well. From the beginning, I was given a spacious workspace with immediate access to any necessary equipment or tools. I have been given interesting, challenging, relevant work and I feel valued. There is no doubt that Carol Smith is an exemplary mentor in addition to being an excellent and well respected Group Leader. I so appreciate the example she has been for me in mentorship, leadership, professionalism, and management. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to share my respect for and deepest gratitude to this wonderful woman.”



“Few things can help an individual more than to place responsibility on him, and to let him know that you trust him.”

-Booker T. Washington, Up from Slavery

[Diana Jackson](#) of NIS-3 is lucky enough to have three mentors, [Michael Carter](#), [Angela Mielke](#), and [Phil Klingner](#), and she chose to recognize them for their attention and time that they continually dedicate to her.

“Unlike the majority of the students that are working here this summer, I have the pleasure and advantage of having not just one, but three mentors. I have done several internships throughout my undergraduate career and have had the good and bad experiences of summer internships. A student's worst fear is to be thrown into a corner for a summer with nothing to do-only to leave without having established a relationship with the person they worked with.

Each of my three mentors contribute in a different way which allows me to get the most of my summer experience. When one is away, I have two more to go to. When they all are present, I know I have at least three people standing behind me willing to assist in any way they can to let me know that my work, time, and effort is valued. Therefore, I take this time to let my mentors (Michael Carter, Angela Mielke, and Phil Klingner) know that their time, investment, and support is highly valued.”

Role Model Mentors

“No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted.” –*Aesop*



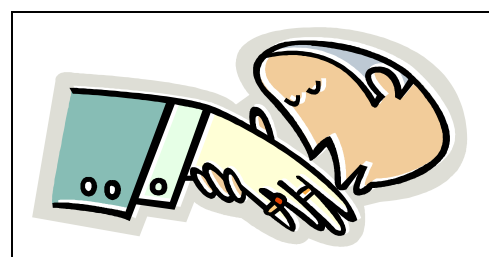
Leah Sandoval pictured with her mentor and friend, Cynthia Bustos, both of EPO.

Leah Sandoval shares that her mentor, Cynthia Bustos is not only a wonderful role model, but also a cherished friend.

“I have worked in EPO for three years now and my whole experience has been wonderful due to my mentor Cynthia Bustos. Cynthia is one of the kindest, sweetest, most generous and supportive people that I have ever met. I am truly lucky to have her as my mentor. Cynthia goes above and beyond every time to make my job not only a job, but a wonderful place to learn, gain experience, and grow professionally. She encourages me to always do my best be it at work or with my education. If I have a problem with part of my work or maybe a personal issue she is there to guide me through it and help in any way she can. She has become more than my mentor, she truly has become a friend that I will always cherish. Mentors don’t get paid to do what they do for their students, they simply want to share and pass on what they know to students who will carry on into the future. So I would like to appreciate my mentor for everything she does, because without great mentors like her, students like me would miss out on great opportunities like this.”

Stephanie Lopez from NMT-6 has enjoyed five summers with her role model and mentor, Debra Johnson.

“I have interacted with my mentor, Mrs. Debra Johnson for five summers now and have had nothing less of a positive experience. Debra encompasses all the qualities that a student looks to in an encouraging role-model. During my time with Debra she has exuded characteristics of being a smart, strong-willed, and diligent worker. It is a rarity that a student interacts with their mentor on a daily bases, but I do. The idea that Debra takes time out of every hectic day to interact with me shows that she cares. Mrs. Johnson has established a comfortable and knowledgeable worker friendly environment. She acknowledges my strengths, but also helps in improving my weaknesses. Debra has made my employment at the laboratory both meaningful and fun. My mentor is not only my supervisor, but also a cohort, offering advice in educational and career decisions. Mrs. Johnson deserves recognition for being an outstanding mentor.”



“We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give”
-Sir Winston Churchill

Alicia Ayala thanks her mentor, Terry Holesinger, for his efforts. Alicia states, “I now feel that I have a much more solid foundation on which I can move forward on my own thanks to his efforts.” She goes on to say:

“Every once in a while we encounter a person that gives us a shove to strive to achieve, but that is only felt as a slight, friendly push. As a result, we are inspired to learn and accomplish. Terry G. Holesinger is such a person. I have been working with him as a graduate student assistant in the Superconductivity Technology Center for the past 2.5 years. During this time he has set an example of a professional and dedicated research scientist. When I started working with Terry I had a set of goals for myself and in a round about way I knew how to plan out a research project and follow through to completion. He has provided professional and technical guidance that has enhanced my skills as a research scientist in training. Terry is involved in numerous projects that consume much of his time, yet he still manages to find time for me. A significant aspect of Terry's mentoring style is his willingness to set me "free" and allow me to define a research direction and set the pace for progress. I now feel that I have a much more solid foundation on which I can move forward on my own thanks to his efforts.

I am currently a year round GRA in pursuit of a Ph.D. in chemical engineering from UNM. I have had the opportunity to share my research experience with two UGS students, Milena Archuleta and Janice Gallegos, that Terry also mentors. Milena Archuleta is currently attending UNM in pursuit of a BS in nursing. She has worked with STC for the past 3 summers. Janice Gallegos is currently attending NMSU in pursuit of a BS in industrial engineering. She has worked with Terry for the past 2 summers. Both Milena and Janice also believe that Terry is worthy of the recognition of an Outstanding Mentor.”

“Keep away from people who try to belittle your ambitions. Small people always do that, but the really great make you feel that you, too, can become great.” -Mark Twain

“When you do the common things in life in an uncommon way, you will command the attention of the world.”
-George Washington Carver

Thank you to all who participated in honoring their mentors in this special edition, and thank you to all LANL Mentors, your time and effort really make a difference in the lives of our students!